



## Player Safe Policy

### POLICY

Alamein Football Club has developed procedures to address all aspects of player safety. We respect the diversity of our community and do not tolerate bullying by players, parents, carers, volunteers or staff. This policy documents the strong commitment of the Board, standing committees, staff and volunteers of the Alamein Football Club (AFC) to safety and provides an outline of the policies and practices AFC has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

### PURPOSE

All girls and women who are a part of AFC have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the players in our care will always be our first priority and AFC has a zero tolerance to abuse, harassment or improper conduct. The Club aims to create a safe and friendly environment where girls feel safe and have fun. AFCs activities are always carried out in the best interests of the players.

Abuse, harassment and bullying are human rights issues that profoundly affect the lives of many people in Australia.

We all have a right to feel safe and respected. We all have a right to live our lives free from violence. Violence, harassment and bullying can violate these rights. They can also impact on other rights, such as the right to education and the right to health. Violence, harassment and bullying affect well-being and quality of life.

Victims can experience significant social isolation and feel unsafe. Bullying can lead to emotional and physical harm, loss of self-esteem, feelings of shame and anxiety, and concentration and learning difficulties. Tragically, violence, harassment and bullying can lead to suicide in extreme cases.

These are not issues that concern only young people. Violence, harassment and bullying can occur in a number of different environments, including in workplaces, sporting clubs and in the community, and can affect people of all ages and backgrounds.

Bullying can also take place in cyberspace: over the internet and on mobile phones. New technologies enable the spread of information, ideas and images to large numbers of people very quickly. There are many challenges in protecting people from violence, harassment and bullying in cyberspace.

We all have a responsibility to create a safe environment by standing up against abuse, violence, harassment and bullying. If bystanders take safe and appropriate action to stop bullying, we can all be a part of the solution.

### IMPLEMENTATION

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation including, but not limited to:

- a) Board members
- b) Committee Members
- c) Administrators
- d) Coaches
- e) Officials
- f) Participants
- g) Parents
- h) Spectators
- i) Paid contractors

All of the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to child protection. They must all:

- a) Understand the indicators and risks of child abuse;
- b) Appropriately act on any concerns raised by players, parents, carers or volunteers;
- c) Understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

## **ABUSE**

Abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm, and these are circumstances that AFC is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

## **HARASSMENT**

Harassment is when a person is treated less favourably on the basis of certain personal characteristics, such as race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, breastfeeding, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

Some limited exemptions and exceptions apply.

Harassment can include behaviour such as:

- telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
- sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages
- displaying racially offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers
- making derogatory comments or taunts about someone's race
- asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including his or her sex life.

A one-off incident can constitute harassment. All incidents of harassment require employers or managers to respond quickly and appropriately.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is an event that occurs when an individual (or a group of individuals) deliberately and repeatedly harm another individual by trying to hurt their body, their feelings, their social inclusion, their property or their reputation.

Bullying behaviour causes someone to feel fearful, threatened, excluded or in pain over an isolated period of time or repeatedly for an extended period of time. It may take different forms and can include:

- *Physical bullying* – any intentional and unwelcome use of physical contact or intimidation.
- *Property* – interference with or damage of personal property.
- *Verbal bullying* – the use of language to threaten or hurt, includes put downs and teasing.
- *Gesture bullying* – the use of non-verbal signals to cause intimidation or fear.
- *Exclusion bullying* – leaving someone out on purpose in order to cause feelings of non-acceptance and hurt.
- *Electronic bullying* – repeated telephoning email, SMS messages, use of webpages and other means of communication which embarrasses, humiliates or causes distress.
- *Gossip* – spreading rumours and damaging reputation.

## **MANDATORY REPORTING**

Mandatory reporting is a term used to describe the legislative requirement imposed on selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to government authorities.

Although, technically not falling under the Mandatory reporting legislation, AFC commits to follow the legislation.

## **RIGHTS TO SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION**

AFC encourages players to express their views about their safety. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all players who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach girls about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns players, or their parents/carers, raise with us.

## **RECRUITING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

The Club takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of personnel:

- a) Interview and conduct referee checks on all volunteers and staff working directly with children (coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, team managers);
- b) Require police checks\* and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions;
- c) Require committee members, Coaches and Team Managers to undertake the 'Play by the Rules' (or approved equivalent) online training course;

## **SUPPORTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

AFC seeks to attract and retain the best personnel. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code. We will provide support to children, parents/carers or volunteers who are involved in the reporting of suspected abuse.

## **REPORTING A SAFETY CONCERN OF COMPLAINT**

Each year AFC appoints several people as a Welfare Committee with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by personnel, parents, carers or players.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our players. To reduce the risk of abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- a) using change room facilities;
- b) travel;
- c) physical contact when coaching or managing children.

### References:

- a) <https://www.casa.org.au/assets/Documents/mandatory-reporting.pdf>
- b) *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic);
- c) *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic); and
- d) *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)

Child Protection Crisis Line – 24 Hours, seven days a week. Telephone: 13 12 78

Ratified by AFC Board April 2019

Next review date March 2020